Towards a Declaration on Universal Norms on Bioethics

Progress report January 2005
The General Conference,

“considers that it is opportune and desirable to set universal standards in the field of bioethics with due regard for human dignity and human rights and freedoms, in the spirit of cultural pluralism inherent in bioethics;”

“invites the Director-General to continue preparatory work on a declaration on universal norms on bioethics, by holding consultations with Member States, the other international organizations concerned and relevant national bodies, and to submit a draft declaration to it at its 33rd session.”

32nd Session of the General Conference of UNESCO - 2003
32 C/Resolution 24
Procedure

Three main phases:

1. Pre-drafting consultation on the scope and structure
   January – April 2004

2. Drafting process
   April 2004 – January 2005

3. Finalization
   January – September 2005
Phase 1: Pre-drafting consultation

December – April 2004: Determination of a timetable

January – April 2004: Broad consultations on the scope and structure of the future declaration

1. Written consultation with Member States
2. Extraordinary Session of IBC (27-29 April 2004)

- Focus on human beings?
- Which fundamental principles?
- Specific areas of application?
Written consultation with Member States

**Procedure**

- Launched on **20 January 2004** with the **190** Member States of UNESCO (Permanent Delegations and National Commissions)

- Simple and concise questionnaire divided into three parts:
  - aims and scope of the declaration
  - structure of the declaration
  - content of the declaration
Results

As of June 2004:

67 questionnaires returned

- Africa : 11
- Asia and Pacific: 8
- Arab States: 10
- Europe and North America: 21
- Central and Eastern Europe: 10
- Latin America and the Caribbean: 6
- Permanent Observers: 1
Aims and Scope of a Declaration on Universal Norms on Bioethics

Should the declaration be limited to human beings?

- YES: 66%
- NO: 34%
## Extraordinary Session of IBC
**(Paris, 27-29 April 2004)**

### Intergovernmental Organizations
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
- World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)
- United Nations University (UNU)
- The Arab League Educational Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO)
- Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)
- Council of Europe
- European Commission

### Non Governmental Organizations
- World Medical Association (WMA)
- Human Genome Organization (HUGO)
- International Council for Science (ICSU)
- Disabled People’s International (DPI)
- International Association of Bioethics (IAB)

### National Bioethics Committees
- Japan
- New Zealand
- Korea
- Tunisia
- Egypt
- France
- Portugal
- United States of America
- United Kingdom
- Republic of Côte d’Ivoire
- Republic of Congo
- Russian Federation
- Croatia
- Mexico
- Dominican Republic

**Around 200 participants from 70 countries**
Phase 2: Drafting process

April 2004 – January 2005

1. 6 Meetings of Drafting Group
   (members of IBC)

2. UN Inter-Agency Committee
   *June and December 2004*

3. National and regional consultations

4. 11th Ordinary session of IBC
   *August 2004*

5. Written consultation on the Third Outline
   *October – December 2005*
Meetings of IBC Drafting Group

30 April 2004: First meeting Drafting Group

2-3 June 2004: Second meeting Drafting Group
    
    1th Outline (15 June 2004) on the website

2-3 July 2004: Third meeting Drafting Group
    
    2nd Outline (27 July 2004) on the website

25-27 August 2004: Fourth meeting Drafting Group
    
    30 August: 3rd Outline (27 August 2004) on the website

27-28 October 2004: Fifth meeting Drafting Group

12-14 December 2004: Sixth meeting Drafting Group
    
    21th December: 4th Outline (15 December 2004) on website
Third and Fourth Meeting of the UN Inter-Agency Committee on Bioethics
Paris, 24-25 June 2004
Paris, 10 December 2004

Participants:

- FAO, UNESCO, UNU, WHO, WIPO, ALECSO,
  European Commission, Council of Europe,
  OECD, WTO

Item 6:
Elaboration of the UNESCO declaration on universal norms on bioethics: progress report and discussion on the scope and content of the draft declaration (June meeting) and the 3rd Outline (December meeting)
National and regional consultations with experts

ETHICS AROUND THE WORLD PROJECT

- The Netherlands: The Hague, 18 March 2004
- Iran (Republic Islamic of): Hamedan, 2 May 2004
- Lithuania: Vilnius, 13 September 2004
- Turkey: Ankara, 15 September 2004
- Argentina: Buenos Aires, 4-5 November 2004
- Korea: Seoul, 16 November 2004
- Mexico: Mexico City, 24 November 2004
- Indonesia: Jakarta, 2 December 2004
- Portugal: Lisbon, National consultation, 5-6 January 2005
- Russian Federation: Moscow, Regional consultation, 21 January 2005
11th Session of IBC


• Hearing of representatives of religious and spiritual perspectives
  - Confucianism
  - Islam
  - Judaism
  - Budhism
  - Hinduism
  - Catholicism

• Public discussion of 2nd Outline
Written consultation
(Third Outline)

Launched on October 19, 2004

Two options:

- statement of general principles; concrete issues in other future texts
- include some concrete issues in the text (e.g. health, scientific research)

The draft declaration is the start of a process, not the end.

When consensus will emerge on specific issues, this can be formulated as principles and included in future, updated versions of the declaration.
As of 7 January 2005:

69 contributions received

- Member States and Permanent Observer : 28
- Intergovernmental organizations: 4
  (+ exchange with Drafting Group on 10 December)
- Non-governmental organizations : 14
- National bioethics committees: 13
- In a personal capacity : 10

Contributions received later:

- Member States: 3
- National bioethics committees: 1
- In a personal capacity : 2
Sixth meeting of IBC Drafting Group
(12-14 December 2004)

Preliminary results of the written consultation
on the Third Outline

Fourth Outline of a Text
(15 December 2004)
Future activities

Phase 2: Drafting process

- 24-25 January 2005: 4th session IGBC
- 26-27 January 2005: Joint session IGBC + IBC
- 28 January 2005: Extraordinary session of IBC

Approval of text by IBC
Future activities

Phase 3: Finalization

* February 2005: Official communication of the preliminary draft
* 4-6 April 2005: 1st meeting of a committee of governmental experts
* 12-28 April: 171st session of Executive Board
* June 2005: 2nd meeting of a committee of governmental experts
* 30 August - 15 September 2005: 172nd session EB
* 19 September – 7 October 2005: 33rd session of General Conference
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